

Minutes from the WeCAN Meeting held at Westfield City Hall Assembly Room on
March 31, 2009 at 7 pm.

Disclaimer: I hope you will find these notes helpful. They are not a complete representation of the meeting, but rather the highlights of topics discussed. Feel free to contact me at Westfield City Services Building (317) 804-3002 if you have any questions. -TB

March 31, 2009

Agenda

- I. Announcements
- II. Fences
- III. Stormwater/Drainage
- IV. Westfield In Bloom
- V. Ending Announcements

I. Announcements

The next WeCAN Meeting will be Tuesday, April 28.

Thanks to everyone for making and sustaining WeCAN! It has been a great year and lots of information has been covered. It is an exciting time in the City of Westfield and we are glad you all are contributing the future of Westfield.

Web Updates – Utility Bill

You can pay your Westfield utility bill online now. Online Bill Pay is active on the City website. You can get to it a few ways:

A.

- 1) Scroll over SERVICES and click on Payment Center
- 2) Click on [Public Works Utility Payment](#)
- 3) Follow instructions to pay your bill

B.

- 1) Scroll over DEPARTMENTS and click on Public Works Department
- 2) On the left side of the page under Divisions, click on Customer Service
- 3) Click on the bold blue text that says [Click Here to pay your Bill online](#)
- 4) Follow instructions to pay your bill

Web Updates – Road Construction

From the homepage, you can click on [Current Road Improvement Updates](#) to see information about current and upcoming construction projects.

CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)

There is an upcoming CERT Meeting/Training on May 5 from 6-8pm in the Public Safety Building - Training Room A. Please contact Rob Gaylor at rgaylor@westfield.in.gov for more information.

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[CERT](#) is about readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. CERT is a realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens will be initially on their own and their actions can make a difference.

Chief Jowitt explained that we currently have 12 residents that have completed CERT Training. The neighborhoods and number per neighborhood are as follows: Ashfield (1); Brookside (1); Centennial (5); Cherrywood (1); Downtown (1); Village Farms (2). There are also members that have not completed their full training but are still participating as CERT members.

Volunteers needed for upcoming Farmer's Market

The Downtown Westfield Neighborhood Association (DWNA) is looking for volunteers to staff the [Farmer's Market](#) for 2009. The Farmer's Market will be held on Friday nights (same as last year) June through the end of September. The first year of the Farmer's Market was highly successful with even more vendor's participating this year. Click here to view the [vendors](#) that are already lined up!

Last year the Market was mostly run by DWNA. This year, they would like to get more involvement from neighborhood residents across Westfield to build community spirit.

Please view the [volunteer sign-up form](#) and contact Julie Sole by Phone: 317-804-3030, Fax: 317-804-3035, Email: info@westfield-chamber.org.

Grand Junction Derby

The Downtown Westfield Neighborhood Association (DWNA) is also going to put on a Grand Junction Derby in Summer 2009. Tom Smith will chair the event. Darlene Lorenz put together a great [PowerPoint](#). (Make sure to play Low Rider in the background! Due to limitations on our site, I had to take off the sound.)

Jim Anderson stressed that the main thing to keep in mind is the purpose of the events: to have fun and engage people by involving the community.

From the discussion, it appeared that many WeCAN neighborhoods, even would be interested in participating. The Police and Fire Departments have also committed to participate. It was also suggested that schools should compete against each other and that there should be different categories for prizes: age, creativity, fastest, uphill, etc.

At the April WeCAN Meeting, DWNA hopes to come back with a rough set of rules and more information about a date. The tentative date was August 2 but that could change.

DWNA is hoping to add more events every year. Numa and the Farmer's Market were successful last year and hope to be even better this year. DWNA is a 501 - 3(c) non-profit. The more funds they raise, the more events they can hold to stimulate the downtown area. Please visit www.dwna.org for more information on how you can help.

II. Fences

Jennifer Miller from [Community Development](#) and Harry Nikides from [Development Construction](#) brought the issue of Fences to WeCAN by request of the City Council. The main question was “Should the City institute a process of issuing permits when new fences are installed?” but other issues were also explored.

Harry discussed the problems that fences can cause without proper installation and research. The fences are not allowed to be built over utilities. In the event that the utility would need to be worked on, the fence would have to be removed which can be costly. Also, fences that sit on the ground do not allow for proper drainage of yards.

Jennifer also mentioned that the fences are not allowed to be over 6 feet in height. It is a code enforcement action that occurs when a complaint is filed. There currently is no permit process in place that would make sure the fences are only 6 feet. About half of the surrounding communities do have a permitting process based on linear foot. The way the permitting process would work is that any new fences that are constructed would have to obtain a permit and the existing fences would be grandfathered in.

A WeCAN representative asked how the permit would relate to the HOA covenants. The answer is that the City can only enforce the [City Ordinance that relates to fences](#). The HOA’s can have covenants that are more restrictive than the ordinance. The City ordinance covers more than just neighborhoods with active HOAs. It was suggested that if a permitting process was put into place, the HOAs would want to take the fence through their architectural board first before it can go to the City for review.

The maximum height of the fence at 6 feet that is in the current ordinance drew no objections. None of the representatives at the meeting had covenants that stated that greater than 6 feet was allowed, some of the covenants state less than 6 feet (which still complies with the City ordinance).

There is a clause that states that residential swimming pools are required to have a fence around them. Community swimming pools are covered in a separate section in the Building Code. Fencing around a gated community is not mentioned.

The discussion brought up the issue that developers who own the subdivision before the homeowner controls it make the decisions to build the fence and when the homeowner takes over they may be left with a fence that is not in compliance with the City ordinance.

Agricultural fences are handled in state statute. The topic of vicious animals came up and will be addressed another time.

III. Stormwater and Drainage

Wes Rood, [Stormwater](#) Specialist with the Public Works Department, gave a [presentation](#) on stormwater, the stormwater utility fee and its uses, wellhead protection and drainage issues. The stormwater for Westfield is untreated. The federal and state governments don't fund the stormwater utility. The fee that appears on the City utility bill (based on meter size) goes to pay for the extensive infrastructure to collect, contain, and filter runoff. It also pays for educational inserts such as the three or four that were sent out last year. The stormwater that ends up in Cool Creek, retention ponds, other areas also have to be monitored and tested for contaminants. If a large amount of contaminants are found, an investigation would occur to find the source. It could be a broken utility or illegal dumping. Please notify Customer Service immediately at 804-3050 if you see anyone dumping paint, grass clippings, old gasoline from mowers, dog poop, etc. down the stormwater grates or straight into a body of water. Also, please don't over fertilize your lawn. Your soil should be tested before adding more fertilizer applications. Also, make sure any chemical applications are done by a person who is state certified. If you do fertilize, please sweep the excess fertilizer from the sidewalk and street back into the grass. If not, the fertilizer will be washed into the storm drains and go untreated into the waterways, endangering the area and wildlife that live there. If there is a small rain, most pollutants are present. With a large rain, the pollutants are diluted.

Next month, there will be a \$5 off coupon for Mike's Carwash inserted in your City utility bill. The reason for the coupon is that the carwash recycles the water and then it is treated. Washing your car in your driveway sends all the water and chemicals along with anything it picks up along the way into the stormwater system, which is untreated.

Many of the drainage issues can be taken care of by educating residents. Backyards that are often flooded have fences that block water from draining. Landscaping features also sometimes block the flow of water. Poor drainage is also a health issue because standing water can be a cesspool for mosquitoes. If you have a drainage issue, you should notify Customer Service at 804-3150. They should respond within 24 hours to your request.

IV. Westfield In Bloom

Linda White presented on [Westfield in Bloom](#) (WIB), a beautification project that stems from the national program called America in Bloom. Purple will be the main color that will be incorporated in the displays. You can do a Google search for "America in Bloom" to get an idea of what the group would like Westfield to be. Hanging baskets will be hung downtown around mid-May. WIB will have a water truck to sustain the plants.

Westfield in Bloom will hold an annual competition. There is no charge to [enter in the contest](#). This year there will be 11 categories. Neighborhood Entrance, Front Porch, and Business Container Garden are a few of the categories. Awards will be given for the winners of each category. There will also be a banquet that honors those that contributed to Westfield in Bloom in any way (monetary, donation of supplies, etc). Contributions are tax deductible.

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May 2, 2009 will be City Planting Day. [Volunteers](#) are needed for this event.

Please contact Melody Sweat, Parks Director at 804-3185 or msweat@westfield.in.gov if you are interested in volunteering or helping in any way.

V. Closing Announcements

Topics for Next WeCAN Meeting: April 28th

Networking

Please bring examples of how your HOA or neighborhood communicates with its residents. How often do you meet, send out newsletters, emails, web updates, etc. Share your best practices, what is working, what doesn't. If you would like to send me examples ahead of time, I can have it ready to go at the meeting.

Geothermal

John Rogers, Director of Enterprise Development, will kick off the Future of Westfield Series. The Future of Westfield Series will highlight the long term visions of the City of Westfield Department Heads. The topics will be in the development stages but will hopefully come to fruition in the future. In April for example, John Rogers will discuss the possibility of residents switching to geothermal energy to become "greener" in addition to cutting heating and cooling costs by over 50%. By utilizing the economies of scale of neighborhoods, the upfront cost for switching would also be reduced. There are also several tax breaks for utilizing geothermal technology.

If you have questions/suggestions, please email Tammy at tblackburn@westfield.in.gov.
Thank you!